

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CONTRACTS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 12, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Howard Austin, Co-chair; Milta Feliciano, Co-chair; Susan Brannelly, Melanie Jackson, Alfredo Castillo, Richard Salter (6:09 p.m.)

OTHERS: John Cottell, Public Facilities Deputy Director; Sgt. Charles Paris, Local #1159; Neil Austin, Labor Relations, Dwayne Harrison, Union President; Fred Fastiggi, Shoreline Power

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Feliciano called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 14, 2015.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED THE MINUTES OF APRIL 14, 2015.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF APRIL 14, 2015 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

72-14 Tentative Agreement with the Police, AFSCME, Local 1159 having reached an agreement concerning the terms and conditions of employment for their membership.

Mr. Neil Austin said that prior to the completion of the arbitration, the City and the Police Union were able to come to an agreement on a tentative contract.

Council Member Salter joined the meeting at 6:09 p.m.

Mr. Austin pointed out that with the new hires, the Police Officers will not receive any post employment health care benefits.

Mr. Austin said that the Police Chief will have the power of termination. The employee will always have the right to appeal, but this will significantly reduce the process from an 8 or 9 months down to a more manageable timeline. This will also reduce costs of administration leave.

The Police enjoyed unlimited sick leave, but now a sick day bank will be established. This will also reduce the amount of workmen's compensation.

The contract also addresses the City's military leave policy, which corresponds with Connecticut State Law. Now the Police will have the same policy that the other employees have.

Under previous contracts, an officer needed 25 years of continuous service with the Police Department for MERF. Now if a City employee transfers to the Police Department, the seniority goes with the employee.

Seniority has been modified. Mr. Austin reviewed the details and said that this will be an improvement.

As deputy chiefs retire, the new deputy chiefs will not be members of the union. The City will also have the option of not filling the position. There are currently four deputy chiefs. They are part of management and this will clarify a number of issues. This also is true of the Fire Department in terms of their table of organization.

Mr. Austin said that Sgt. Paris has put a great deal of work in this contract. Last year, there was a tentative agreement that was approved by the Union Executive Board but did not pass with the rank and file. That failure to pass required that the negotiations start again and go to arbitration.

Mr. Austin said that the concessions were consistent with the terms that the Council had set out. He spoke about furloughs and how the savings were achieved by the unions.

Council Member Howard Austin asked about paragraph 13, which addresses the Chief terminating an officer. Mr. Neil Austin explained that the officer would retain his medical benefits, but will not be receiving salary while on leave. Sgt. Paris said that there were two officers that were waiting for hearings from the Police Commission. One officer has been waiting for two years and there has only been two hearings so far. The second officer has been waiting for 18 months and the hearings have not started. Mr. Austin said that if the officers who appeal to the arbitrators lose the case, they may be required to reimburse the City. Now the Labor Relations Department is calculating how much a potential case may cost the officers.

Council Member Jackson asked about the sick bank. Mr. Austin explained that there were perils involved in fighting crime. The officers will accrue sick time and when they retire, the City will buy out the sick days. Sgt. Paris said that 92% of the officers come in and the remaining 8% need a bit more time.

Sgt. Paris said that the union had not had a contract since 2012. The membership turn out for the vote was very high. There are many changes in the new contract, and the unlimited sick time was something that was hard to give up. The department is one of the lowest paid department in the State. The union members passed the tentative agreement overwhelming.

Council Member Brannelly asked about disability. Sgt. Paris said that the union has set up a bank in case an officer is sick and out of sick days, vacation times and holidays.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the timing of the negotiations. The contract will start on July 1, 2015. Then in January 2016, the negotiations will start again. Mr. Austin said that the negotiation sessions made some inroads, but the seniority issue took a long time. He reviewed the time line of the recent negotiations. It would not be surprising to have a tentative agreement ready before July 1st, 2016.

Council Member Salter asked about the sick bank. Sgt. Paris clarified the details of the system for the Committee. Mr. Austin said that the bank will be administered by the union for its members. He said that the City will fund the bank as required.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 72-14 TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH THE POLICE, AFSCME, LOCAL 1159 HAVING REACHED AN AGREEMENT CONCERNING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR THEIR MEMBERSHIP.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

73-14 Tentative Agreement with NAGE, RI-200 having reached an agreement concerning the terms and conditions of employment for their membership.

Mr. Neil Austin said that he was presenting the NAGE contract. The highlight was wages and the average increase was 2.5%. With NAGE, the negotiations were able to achieve the Council requirements. He said that this also has no post employment benefits.

Mr. Austin said that there was an option to re-open the health care agreement and explained that no one knows what will happen next year with the health benefits requirements.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 73-14 TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH NAGE, RI-200 HAVING REACHED AN AGREEMENT CONCERNING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR THEIR MEMBERSHIP.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

83-14 Proposed Energy Services Agreement with Bridgeport, Microgrid, LLC for the City Hall Microgrid Project.

Mr. Cottell then came forward to speak about a microgrid for City Hall, the Police Department and the new Senior Center. He said that this discussion initially came about following the severe storms that the area experienced since 2009. The idea is to increase the resiliency of the power grid.

This is about a generator that is producing energy. Mr. Cottell then displayed a diagram showing the Police Department, City Hall and the new Senior Center. The generators will produce both electric and heat. In the event that the generators were running 24/7 because the grid was down, it will supply light and heat to the three buildings and potentially a few others.

Council Member Austin asked about flooding. Mr. Cottell said that the wiring was underground. Currently the wiring for the Police Department, City Hall and the Senior Center is above ground and this was where most of the damage occurred in 2009.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the natural gas storage. Mr. Cottell said that originally, the idea was for a reliable supply with very large tanks in back of City Hall, but the idea had been modified and would not require the original large tanks.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the former Eisenhower Center. Mr. Cottell said that they have a pool and the micro-grid could supply only heat to the building and the pool. Mr. Fastiggi explained that it would be important to use up the thermal energy as much as possible. The more thermal energy the City uses, the more State credits it receives.

Council Member Brannelly asked if there would be an estimate on savings. Mr. Cottell said that they would be some savings on the heat and gave the details.

Council Member Salter asked if there would be credits from the Federal Government. Mr. Cottell said that it was a State Green program. The State gave the City money to do the electrical work.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MADE A MOTION TO AMEND RESOLUTION 83-14 "PROPOSED ENERGY SERVICE AGREEMENT WITH BRIDGEPORT MICROGRID, LLC FOR CITY HALL MICROGRID PROJECT.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Cottell distributed copies of the changes and reviewed the details.

Council Member Feliciano asked about the three different charges. Mr. Cottell reviewed the details of the 8 million project with them. Discussion followed.

Council Member Feliciano asked if there would be compensation from the private building. Mr. Fastiggi said that it is worth it to use as much of the heat as possible.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the \$33,000 a month rate. Mr. Cottell suggested that this be thought of as the debt service on the capital improvement.

Council Member Castillo left the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Council Member Austin asked the difference in the cost of the kilowatt hours with the new company as compared to U.I. Mr. Cottell said that rather than paying U.I. and for Natural Gas, the payments would go to Bridgeport Microgrid.

Council Member Castillo left the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the details listed on page 21 of the contract. Mr. Cottell reviewed the details and also pointed out that the City would also be saving on the sales tax of 6%.

Council Member Brannelly said that she was concerned about the pool at the former Eisenhower Center. Mr. Fastiggi said that there were other options, but this one would be the best of those options. Discussion followed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO APPROVE AS AMENDED AND TO RECOMMEND TO THE CITY COUNCIL THAT CERTAIN PROPOSED ENERGY SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR THE CITY HALL MICROGRID PROJECT TO BE ENTERED INTO BETWEEN THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT AND BRIDGEPORT MICROGRID, LLC; AND TO AUTHORIZE AND EMPOWER THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE SUCH AGREEMENT SUBSTANTIALLY AS SUBMITTED/PRESENTED AND IN FINAL FORM SATISFACTORY TO THE CITY'S CAO, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC FACILITIES, FINANCE DIRECTOR AND CITY ATTORNEY; AND TO AUTHORIZE AND EMPOWER THE MAYOR AND THE APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TAKE ALL REASONABLE AND NECESSARY IMPLEMENTATION ACTION TO EFFECTUATE THE AGREEMENT.**

Council Member Brannelly asked if the \$33,000 was the amount that the City was already paying for lighting and heat. Mr. Cottell confirmed that it was.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** COUNCIL MEMBER SALTER SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services